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Egypt working to calm down regional tensions

By Mail staff

EGYPT maintained its efforts this week to calm down regional tensions and open more channels of communication with its regional and international partners.

On Wednesday, President Abdel Fattah El Sisi received King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain to discuss bilateral ties and the situation in the region.

The president said his meeting with the Bahraini monarch came at a time of great peril as a result of the bloody Israeli war on the Gaza Strip and the inexorable loss of helpless and innocent civilians in scenes of untold horror.

"They have done nothing more than live in their own land, clinging to their homes and homeland, and yearning for a life with dignity, pride and humanity," the Egyptian leader said of the people of Gaza at a press briefing with King Hamad following their meeting in Cairo.

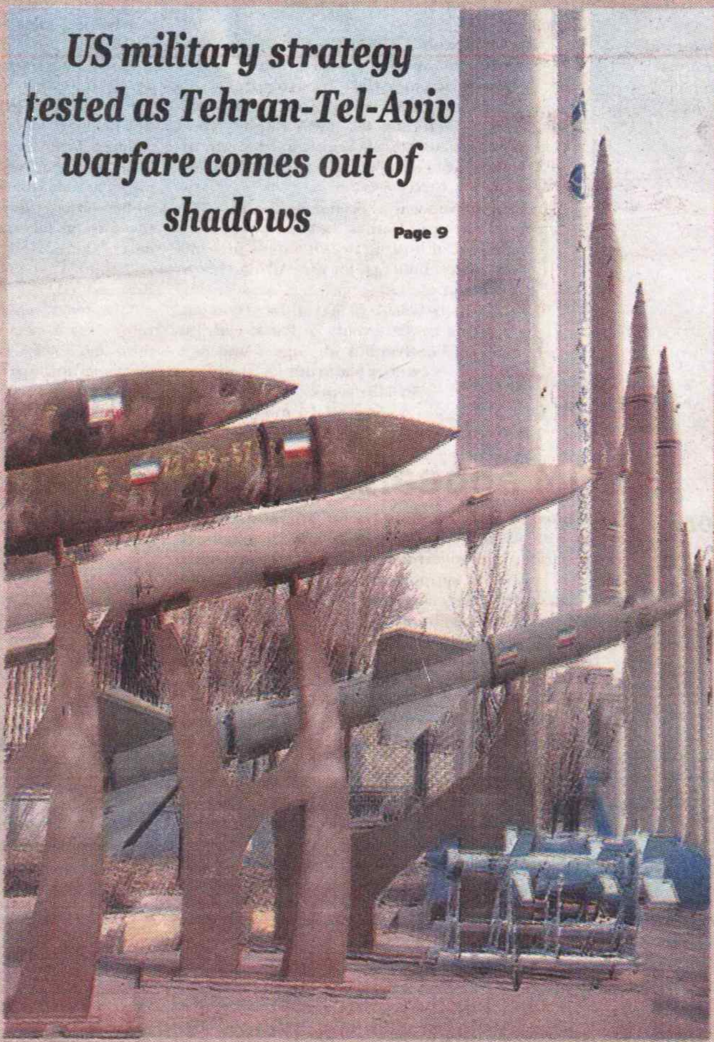
He described the present time as a 'watershed moment' that would endure in the annals of history, given the outrageous use of military force to terrorise, starve and inflict unimaginable suffering on innocent civilians, collectively and indiscriminately, to terrify them into abandoning their homes and forcibly displacing them from their land.

Read full story on Page 3



Documentary, fantasy at Cannes

Read full story on Page 10



US military strategy tested as Tehran-Tel-Aviv warfare comes out of shadows

Page 9

Themes



Listen to the voice of reason

Page 3

By Mohamed Fahmy

Reasons behind decrease in Egypt's population growth

- Population growth down from 2.6% in 2017 to 1.4% in 2023

Read full story on Page 11

Egypt aspiring to bring Olympic Games to Africa

Read full story on Page 2

Al-Sakakini Palace under restoration



Read full story on Page 6

Streamlining development in Suez Canal

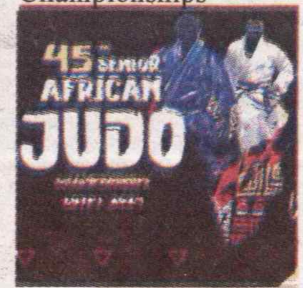
- SCZone lured investments worth $2.56b between July 2023 and February 2024

Read full story on Page 4

Combating negative impacts of carry trade

Read full story on Page 12

Cairo gears up for African Judo Championships



Read full story on Page 14



Egypt aspiring to bring Olympic Games to Africa in 2036

By A'laa Koddous Allah

THE 2024 Olympic Games in Paris are 100 days away, but staging the world's biggest sporting event is a privilege Africa has never been afforded.

That could be set to change, with Egypt preparing to table a proposal to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for the 2036 Games.

With construction on potential venues well under way – and some already completed – one Egyptian official has declared it is "time for Africa".

"We can't claim the IOC and the Olympic Games to be universal without hosting a Games on the African continent," Dr Kamilla Swart-Arries, an expert in sports, tourism and events management, said.

But what would it take for the continent to host the Olympics for the first time?

Does Africa have the infrastructure?

Africa has previously put on large sporting events, including the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, while Morocco will co-host football's biggest tournament in 2030.

Dakar in Senegal is preparing for the 2026 Youth Olympic Games, but the sheer scale and cost of hosting the Olympics presents the main challenge for any African bid to overcome.

There will be 10,500 athletes competing in 329 events in Paris, with the Paralympics in August and September featuring 4,400 athletes in 549 events.

Around 15 million tourists are expected to visit the French capital.

According to Sharif El Erian, the secretary-general of Egypt's National Olympic Committee (NOC), there are "very few countries in Africa" which have the capability to host the Games.

"They were totally right not to come to Africa before," a news agency quoted El Erian as saying.

"If you want me to pick three countries which are the best when it comes to facilities in Africa, I can pick easily: Egypt, South Africa and Morocco. The rest have no chance."

Some facilities earmarked by Egypt for 2036, including a 90,000-seater stadium, are already in use at its yet-to-be-named New Administrative Capital, located some 40km east of Cairo.

"I think Egypt is ready now," El Erian added.

"The main support infrastructure – roads, security, airports and hotels – has been developed in the past seven or eight years very strongly."



Food poisoning cases on rise in S. African province

THE Department of Health in South Africa's Gauteng province has cautioned the public about a spike in food poisoning cases, especially among children in the province.

A shocking incident saw 41 children, aged 3 to 5, rushed to Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital after mistakenly consuming rat poison, thinking it was candy.

Another 10 people were treated at Thelle Mogoerane Regional Hospital in Ekurhuleni after ingesting poisonous substances.

These incidents bring the total number of foodborne illnesses recorded since October to 863, with 11 lives lost.

Acting Head of Communication, Khutso Rabothata, assures that support and resources will continue for affected communities.

The department urges parents and caregivers to be vigilant and join the effort to prevent food poisoning. Public health campaigns are underway to raise awareness in townships, informal settlements, and hostels about the risks of foodborne diseases.

IOM appeals for funds to support migrants

THE International Organisation for Migration (IOM), along with 48 other humanitarian and development organisations and governments, is urgently appealing for $112 million to support over 2.1 million migrants and host communities along the Eastern and Southern routes, including in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The call for funds was made at a donor briefing in Geneva, Switzerland, on 16 April.

The appeal comes in the wake of last week's tragedy off the coast of Djibouti in which at least 38 migrants, including children, lost their lives after their boat capsized and sank after leaving Yemen.

"Last week's tragedy is yet another very uncomfortable wake up call," said Ugochi Daniels, IOM deputy director-general for operations. "The humanitarian, protection, and development needs of migrants across the eastern and southern migration routes are demanding our attention."

Each year, tens of thousands of migrants embark on a journey from the Horn of Africa, primarily Ethiopia and Somalia, seeking work in the Gulf countries via the 'eastern route.'

Additionally, migrants travel through Kenya, Tanzania, and several countries in Southern Africa, to try and reach South Africa via the 'southern route.'

These routes are among the most dangerous, complex, and under-reported migratory routes in the world. Hundreds of thousands of migrants were recorded moving along these routes each year. In 2023, 480,000 movements were recorded.



Migrants often face starvation, dehydration and human rights abuses, including sexual violence and exploitation, by human traffickers and smugglers.

As of December 2023, 46 per cent of arrivals in Yemen were women and children, with almost 20 per cent of the children unaccompanied travelling along the 'eastern route.'

Egypt calls for ceasefire in Gaza



In meetings with Bahraini monarch, Russian intelligence chief, Sisi invites attention to necessity of establishing Palestinian state on 1967 borders

By Mail staff

PRESIDENT Abdel Fattah El Sisi said this week that the crisis in Gaza unfolds while the international community stands idly by, even as it is able to uphold justice and enforce international law, international humanitarian law.

He added at a press briefing with King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa in Cairo on Wednesday that he discussed with the Bahraini monarch their two countries' efforts and joint Arab action to address this untenable situation, bring it to an end and, above all, prevent its recurrence.

"For this to happen, the international community shall stand united to enforce an immediate, urgent and lasting ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, end any attempts of coerced displacement, starvation or collective punishment of the brotherly Palestinian people, and ensure the full-fledged, unfettered and sustainable flow of sufficient quantities of desperately-needed humanitarian and relief aid to Gaza," the Egyptian leader said.

"In parallel, the parties shall immediately embark, in earnest, on tracks conducive to a just and enduring political solution to the Palestinian cause, on the basis of the two-state solution, and the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State, along the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital," he added.

He noted that this Palestinian state has to enjoy both international acknowledgment and full membership of the United Nations.

President Sisi referred to Egypt's repeated warnings against the direct political, security and humanitarian ramifications of the Gaza war on the Palestinians and the inevitable adverse spill-over of the conflict.

He said subsequent escalation could plunge the region into a cycle of violence and counter-violence, in ways that ruthlessly obliterate any hope of peace and a stable and a secure life for the peoples of the region.

"Indeed, over the past few months, the region has been experiencing the devastating consequences of the current war, as its flames spiralled outward, creating the current intensely fraught and perilous state in the region that gravely jeopardises the security, stability and future of our peoples," President Sisi said.

He added that he and King Hamad thoroughly discussed these troubling regional developments and their visions for addressing them, driven by their countries' shared belief in the crucial importance of safeguarding the security and stability of the region and its peoples against multiple threats.

This commitment, he said, is grounded in the principle of prioritising common Arab security, which we consider as indivisible.

"We agreed on the urgent need to exert and encourage immediate and intensive efforts toward de-escalation, both in the Palestinian territories and at the regional level," President Sisi said.

"We also concurred about the importance of urging the parties to adopt a rational approach, embrace political solutions, and abandon military solutions and notions of dominance and hegemony," he added.

A day earlier, President Sisi received Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation, Sergei Naryshkin, and his accompanying delegation.

Talks between the Egyptian leader and the Russian intelligence chief focused on the regional situation, primarily ways to achieve stability in the Middle East amid the crisis in Gaza and escalating tensions in the region.

They also touched on a number of African issues, counter terrorism efforts, as well as latest developments on the international arena, especially in Ukraine and Afghanistan.

The meeting also reviewed Egypt's efforts to calm the situation in the region through its engagement with all parties.

President Sisi affirmed Egypt's vision regarding the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the unfettered flow of sufficient humanitarian and relief aid, as fundamental steps to defuse regional tensions.

"Egypt's stance also envisages the crucial need to reach a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian issue, and the establishment of the Palestinian state, along the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, to ensure peace and stability in the Middle East," President Sisi said.

The two sides emphasised their commitment to maintaining consultations and coordination between their two countries on various issues, given their outstanding historical relations.

Themes



By

Mohamed Fahmy

Listen to the voice of reason

SINCE the beginning of the Israeli war on Gaza, President Abdel Fattah El Sisi has repeatedly warned that the conflict will engulf the region, threatening its stability and security.

Indeed, 190 days after the outbreak of this war, Iran has launched drone attacks on Israel, which may respond in kind, dragging the region into a new conflict that may have serious repercussions.

These developments confirm the validity of the Egyptian leadership's vision, which warned from the first day of the Gaza war against the consequences of expanding the circle of conflict in the region. Egypt's vision is firm, clear, and beyond doubt, which is to work to stabilise the region and establish an independent Palestinian state through negotiations.

Egypt reaffirmed its position with the beginning of the Iranian attacks against Israel. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry issued a statement expressing its deep concern over what it described as "indications of dangerous escalation" between Tehran and Tel-Aviv, calling for the exercise of the utmost restraint to spare the region and its peoples from additional instability and tension.

The Foreign Ministry noted that the dangerous escalation between Iran and Israel is a direct result of the expansion of the scope of the war in Gaza, something Egypt warned against repeatedly in the past.

As part of Egypt's efforts to contain the situation and restore calm to the region, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry made three calls with the Iranian, Israeli, and American foreign ministers to express Cairo's deep concern as a result of the unprecedented military escalation between Tehran and Tel Aviv, which threatens the stability of the region and jeopardises the interests of its people.

Egypt affirmed, through its Foreign Minister, its readiness to intensify its efforts in co-operation with its partners in order to defuse the current crisis. It also affirmed its firm position on a ceasefire in Gaza, facilitating the entry of humanitarian aid, rejecting any measures aimed at displacing Palestinians outside their lands, and rejecting any ground military operations in the Palestinian city of Rafah.

The expansion of the conflict due to the war on Gaza, as is happening between Iran and Israel, will not be in the interest of any party, and will bring more tension and instability to the peoples of the region.

It can be said that the Iranian attack represents the climax of the escalation with Israel in the wake of the Gaza War, and that its repercussions will extend to many files in the region. The possible escalation scenarios between the two sides during the coming period will be governed by many factors related to the calculations of the two parties and their capabilities to enter into an open military confrontation.

The current situation affirms the priority for strengthening Arab capabilities and finding a regional formula to contain the situation peacefully and confront any threats. It also stresses on the necessity of holding strategic dialogues and partnerships with regional and international powers with the aim of ensuring stability in the region, reaching a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, resorting to the voice of reason, and entering into direct and immediate negotiations to establish an independent Palestinian state.

Mohamed Fahmy is the editor-in-chief of The Egyptian Gazette and Egyptian Mail newspapers

Streamlining development in Suez Canal

The government and the business community are keeping fingers crossed that the development of the Suez Canal Zone will have a multiplier-effect on Egypt economy.

Analysis by Ahmed Kamel



EGYPT'S maritime industry is seen to boom thanks to expansions in the Suez Canal Economic Zone. The Suez Canal megaproject is expected to become a hub for sustainable economic in the most populous Arab country of 106 million people.

The government and the business community are keeping fingers crossed that the development of the Suez Canal zone will have a multiplier-effect on the economy in Egypt and the broader landscape in Africa and the Middle East.

General Authority for Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZone) lured investments worth $2.56 billion for 125 new projects between July 2023 and February 2024. Sixty projects of investments worth $1.13 billion have been finally approved and 65 others obtained initial approvals. The new projects are expected to create more than 21,000 jobs.

SCZone has unveiled plans to launch a utility company for zone's northern pole to meet growing demand for basic networks required for the industrial zones. The authority's new project is designed to be similar to a utility company for the southern pole.

The SCZone's master plan comprises a wide range of industrial zones for shipyards, container and automotive plants. The area is planned to house cement, steel, automotive, ceramics, petrochemical plants and fish farms.

Industrial zones

In a bid to boost industrialisation in SCZone, the government offers incentives to investors to launch export-orientated facilities. To this end, Egypt plans to launch a number of industrial zones in collaboration with China, Russia and other countries.

The Canal remains a critical component of global trade and investment. Its strategic location and efficient operations have helped drive economic growth in Egypt and beyond, making it an essential part of the world economy.

Green bunkering

SCZone signed an agreement with Rotterdam Port Authority for creating a route for green fuel, produced at SCZone, to European markets. The agreement is also aimed at activating a green bunkering corridor from Singapore to Rotterdam, passing through the economic ports of the Suez Canal.

The new project will be the first green bunkering for ships between the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe thanks to the strategic location of the Suez Canal and its affiliated seaports on the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

New extension

The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) is working on plans to extend the second channel of the waterway. Data from SCA shows that there is about 80 kilometres in the Canal without duplication, 50 kilometres in the north and 30 kilometres in the south.

SCA plans to extend the waterway's second channel by 10 kilometres.

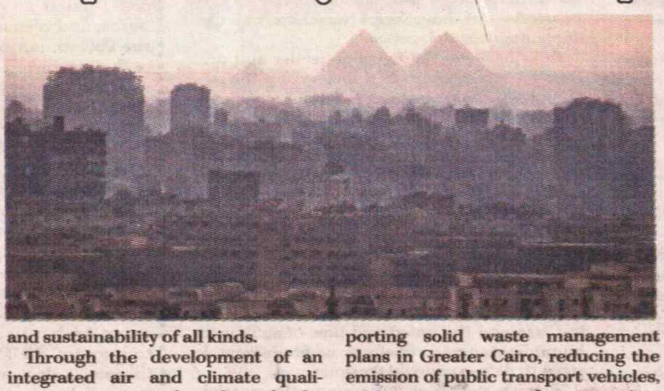
In 2015, President El Sisi opened a parallel channel to boost the waterway's potential. The new facility has enhanced the world maritime activities, shortened traffic through the waterway and increase the number of vessels passing through it.

The new 72-km channel cost roughly $4 billion, in addition to $4 billion more for six tunnels beneath the Suez Canal for linking Sinai and the Nile Delta.

In 2014, the President unveiled development plans for the Suez Canal corridor to turn the area into a global trade hub, rather than a mere waterway, emulating Dubai, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Egypt's Greater Cairo air pollution management counters impacts of climate change

By Mail Staff



MINISTRY of Environment has undertaken the Greater Cairo Air Pollution Management and Climate Change Project, funded by the World Bank.

Although air quality in Greater Cairo has recently improved, air pollution remains the city's greatest environmental safety problem, which has a severe impact on the lives of the population and the economy.

Recent studies have estimated the annual economic cost of air pollution on health in the Greater Cairo region alone at 1.4 per cent of Egypt's GDP.

The six-year project aims to support Egypt's efforts to reduce the emission of air and climate pollutants, in line with the country's sustainable development strategy, Egypt Vision 2030, funded by the World Bank, to improve air quality by reducing different emissions from vital sectors.

This led to increasing the ability to resist air pollution in Greater Cairo and reducing pollutant concentrations, especially those with the most adverse impact on health, economy, and sustainability of all kinds.

Through the development of an integrated air and climate quality management plan through the components of the project and the implementation of a robust and economically programme to address the impacts of climate change in order to achieve the objectives of Egypt's Vision 2030 in reducing greenhouse emissions.

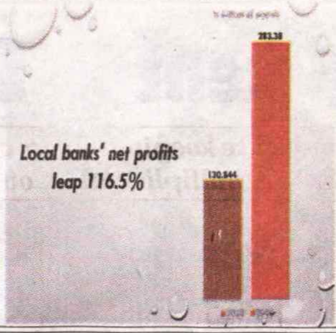
The project has five main components: strengthening the decision support system on air quality; supporting solid waste management plans in Greater Cairo, reducing the emission of public transport vehicles, raising awareness and communication, and project management, monitoring, and evaluation.

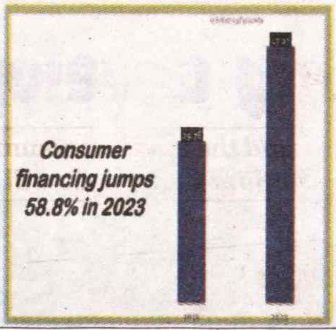
The ministerial agreement for the project was signed between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministries of Local Development, Transport, Health, and Population, Qalyoubia Governorates, Cairo and Giza, and the Transport Authority in Cairo in order to coordinate and identify mechanisms and frameworks for project implementation at a total cost of $200 million.

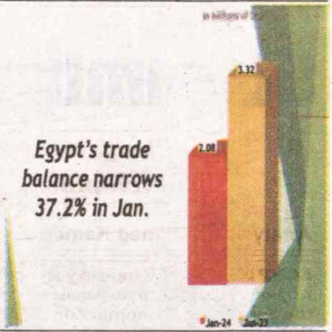
Minister of Environment Yasmine Fouad confirmed after they got an extra fund estimated at $9.13 million from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that this additional funding is a success due to achieving all the objectives and outputs of the project Protecting Human Health and the Environment from Unintentional Emissions of Persistent Organic Pollutants from the Open Burning of Electronic Residues and HealthCare Residues, which was implemented during the period from 2016 to 2021 through a grant from GEF.

GEF is the world's largest international mechanism, providing grants to governments in developing countries through United Nations organisations to implement projects that enable them to fulfil their commitments to the international environmental conventions they have signed, such as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).









Local micro, SMEs finances jump 41.7% to LE57.09b

By Mail staff

FINANCING balances for micro, small and-medium enterprises (SMEs) jumped by 41.7 per cent to LE57.09 billion in the fourth quarter in 2023, up from LE40.27 billion in the same month a year earlier, according to data from the Financial Regulatory Authority (FRA).

The number of beneficiaries fell to 3.81 million 2023 Q4, down from 3.9 million in the same month the previous year. Microfinance companies pumped finances worth LE50.61 billion in 2023 Q4, according to FRA data.

Microfinance plays a significant role in boosting Egypt's national economy and the private sector.

It can also empower women by giving them access to financial resources that they may not have had otherwise.

Microfinance plays a key role in promoting financial inclusion. Many low-income individuals do not have access to basic financial services such as savings accounts or insurance.

Microfinance institutions provide these services, helping individuals build assets and protect themselves against unexpected financial shocks.

One of the key ways in which microfinance helps the economy is by providing much-needed capital to small businesses and entrepreneurs. These individuals often struggle to secure loans from traditional banks due to their lack of collateral or credit history.

Microfinance institutions, on the other hand, are more willing to take on the risk of lending to these individuals, helping them start or expand their businesses.

Gold may hit 2,700 per ounce

Goldman Sachs has raised the outlook for gold prices to $2,700 per ounce by the end of 2024, up from $2,300 per ounce.

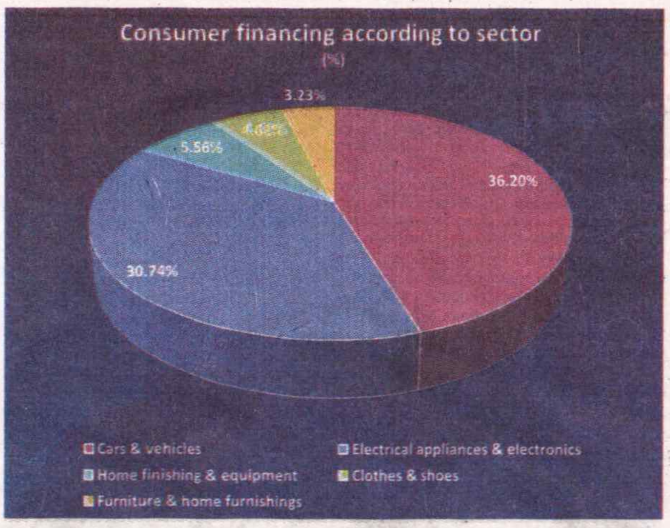
Gold is at an all-time-high and is getting attention. But assets at such levels are challenging for investors who think they may have missed the boat, the World Gold Council said in a report.

However, the WGC has said that gold is currently well supported by fundamentals, and the low participation from US investors in particular augurs well for the rally to continue, in contrast to what we saw in 2011.

"The rally that started in early March left some commentators scratching their heads as to the cause. Our Gold Return Attribution Model (GRAM) suggested risk and momentum factors were behind the move higher. Particularly instrumental was gold's implied volatility, which shot up during March — as it did during September 2022, March 2023 and October 2023, although this time it was not accompanied by a rise in bonds' implied volatility (MOVE index) and therefore more suggestive of a gold-specific punt," said the WGC report.

Gold's share of assets is low not only from the unrelenting push higher in the prices of other assets but the large issuance of financial securities. Gold's physical supply constraints means that its price has to do the heavy lifting to maintain a sensible share of assets.

According to the WGC report, the Geopolitical Risk (GPR) index moved higher again, as geopolitical tensions convulsed across several fronts. From a macro perspective - despite heady markets and a soft Fed - there was an important crossover in US data surprises suggesting stagflation risks might be on the rise again, a supportive development for gold prices.





Market cap
LE1.915T
Weekly loss
-0.7%

Volume
LE338.8B







Rococo gem Al-Sakakini Palace under restoration

By Salwa Samir

AL-SAKAKINI Palace, located in Cairo's Al-Daher District, is currently undergoing a restoration project to regain its former glory. This stunning example of Rococo design is a true gem, showcasing Cairo's rich cultural heritage.

In 1897, the palace was built by the French architect Count Gabriel Habib Sakakini Pasha, who drew inspiration from a palace in Italy. Situated at the intersection of eight major roads, Al-Sakakini Palace became a centerpiece in Cairo's vibrant landscape.

Previously, the Health Education Museum was relocated from Abdeen to Al-Sakakini Palace in 1961, under the care of the Egyptian Ministry of Health. Now, the Supreme Council of Antiquities administers this remarkable site, which holds great significance in both Coptic and Islamic traditions. Visitors can explore the palace and admire its antiquities collection.

Count Sakakini Pasha, a Syrian noble and successful businessman contributed to the construction of the Suez Canal, settled in Cairo oversaw the completion of the Khedivial Opera House. In recognition of his services, Al-Sakakini Pasha earned the Ottoman titles 'Bey' and Count in 1901. He also left his mark on Old Cairo with the Roman Catholic Cemetery and the Roman Catholic Patriarchate.

With its exquisite Rococo style, Al-Sakakini Palace is a masterpiece of baroque architecture from 18th-century France. Both the interior and exterior of the palace are adorned with ornamental art, paintings, sculptures, and decorative elements that leave visitors in awe.

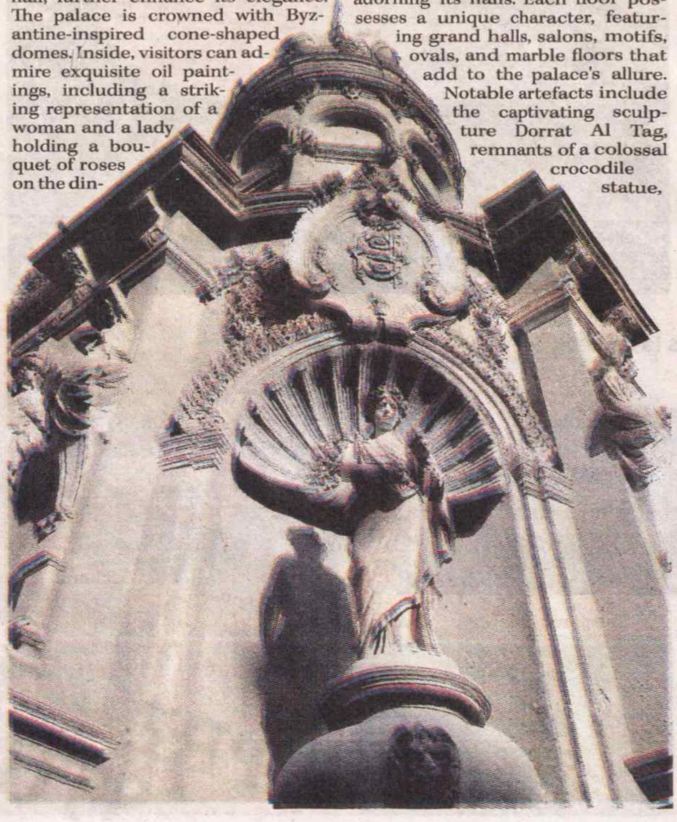
Spanning over 2,698 square metres, the palace consists of five stories, 50 rooms, approximately 400 doors and windows, and a remarkable collection of 300 meticulously decorated statues.

The palace's distinctive design features a façade decorated with statues of young girls, children, and two majestic lions. The architectural style seamlessly combines elements of Rococo with Italian, Greek, and Roman influences.

Islamic decorative elements, such as mashrabiyas in the reception hall, further enhance its elegance. The palace is crowned with Byzantine-inspired cone-shaped domes. Inside, visitors can admire exquisite oil paintings, including a striking representation of a woman and a lady holding a bouquet of roses on the dining room ceiling, with a young child beside them, surrounded by ethereal angel drawings.

At the entrance, a marble fountain takes centre stage, accompanied by marble lion sculptures that gracefully spout water from their mouths.

The palace's artwork reflects both Renaissance and Christian influences, with angelic and human figures adorning its halls. Each floor possesses a unique character, featuring grand halls, salons, motifs, ovals, and marble floors that add to the palace's allure. Notable artefacts include the captivating sculpture Dorrat Al Tag, remnants of a colossal crocodile statue, and a striking half-statue of Habib Al Sakakini at the main entrance.



In 2016, a fire damaged the basement guardroom of Al-Sakakini Palace, but fortunately, the rest of the palace, including its decorations and architecture, remained unscathed.

To preserve the historical and archaeological significance of Al-Sakakini Palace, ongoing restoration efforts are underway through a collaboration protocol between the Ministries of Tourism and Antiquities, Housing, and Urban Communities. The restoration project, funded by the Cairo Fatimid and Islamic Revitalisation Agency, includes archaeological surveys, documentation, and scientific analyses of construction materials.

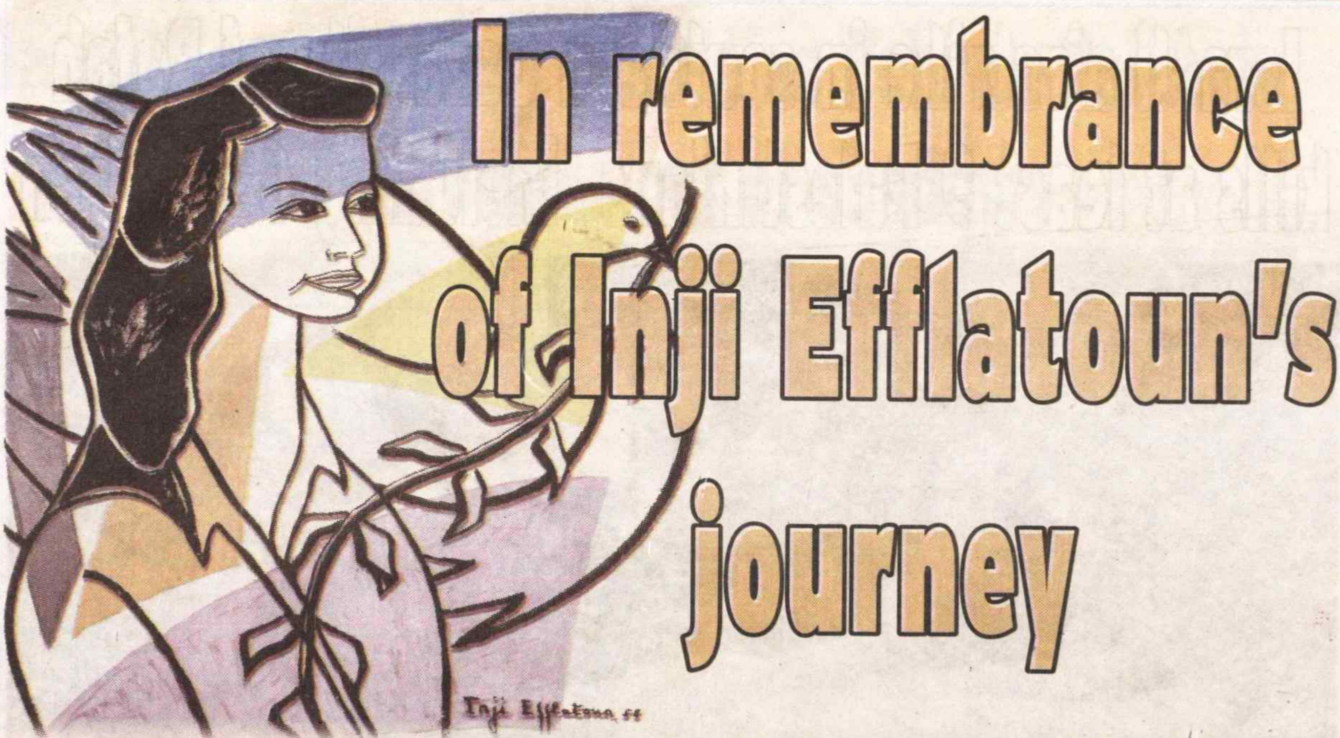
These efforts have led to exciting discoveries, such as basement floor levels, coloured tiles beneath mosaic tiles, and authentic wall paintings beneath more recent layers.

A team of architects and historians is currently dedicated to the extensive restoration project, with the goal of reviving the palace to its original splendor. Archival research is also being conducted to uncover the palace's historical and cultural significance.

Once the restoration is complete, Al-Sakakini Palace will reopen to the public as a cultural hub, hosting exhibitions, performances, and educational programmes that celebrate Egypt's artistic heritage.

The Al-Daher district, where the palace is located, is also renowned for its rich history and cultural significance.

As visitors explore this vibrant neighbourhood, they will encounter beautifully preserved architectural marvels, traditional shops, ancient mosques and palaces, traditional music and dance performances, and lively markets, cafés, and street food, offering a delightful blend of old-world charm and modern conveniences.



In remembrance of Inji Efflatoun's journey

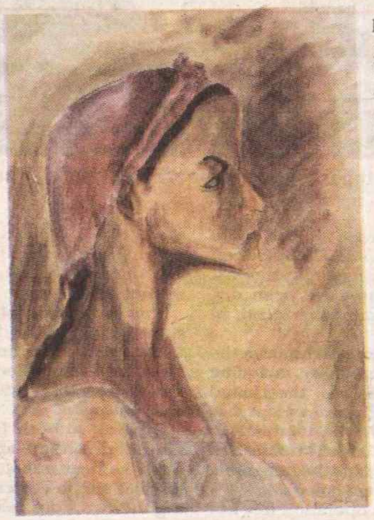
By Maryam Raafat

SAFARKHAN Art Gallery has exhibited a collection of Egypt's foremost artist-cum-activist, Inji Ffflatoun.

The exhibition, which was held last week, commemorated Efflatoun's birth centenary.

Efflatoun (1924-1989), affectionately known by her first name among all her fans, left an enduring legacy that has inspired legions of art lovers; artists; activists, and revolutionaries decades after her passing.

Subsequent recognition and admiration of her incomparable personal story has only gained more traction with each passing year, not least because of its undeniable salience to the tempestuous socio-political landscapes of our modern world.





Efflatoun's message was simple yet as uplifting as it is everlasting, a woman of privilege who felt severed from her roots.

She ceaselessly and compassionately devoted her life to her downtrodden compatriots, and by extension to all those like them elsewhere.

Efflatoun embodied within this noble act the other profound message of her existence which now lives on through her art – the quest of an individual seeking purpose.

As the celebrated poet, author and one of Efflatoun's contemporaries and mentors, George Henein, poignantly described her empathetic disposition; Efflatoun was immersed within "her imaginary world around a bird of dreams and the heavy weight of the void".

Her centenary exhibition was a one-of-a-kind biographical exposition of her life and works.

This distinctive multimedia exhibition was the very first of its kind at Safarkhan. There is hardly an artistic personality more befitting of such an endeavour, given the gallery's intimate personal relationship with Efflatoun during her storied career.

Owing to the special nature of this exhibition, it draws upon various sources to establish a comprehensive exposé consisting of the artist's otherwise ordinary personal possessions, some of the curious artefacts she collected over the years, unseen photographic records from the heights of her artistic career in Egypt and abroad, video-graphical segments from a recent biopic on the artist for which gallery founder and esteemed patron of the arts, Sherwet Shafei, was interviewed, previously un-exhibited seminal oil works from Safarkhan's private collections for educational purposes, and lastly a curated assortment of some of the most impressive examples of her remaining portfolio, spanning a variety of mediums and themes, many of which were revealed to the public for the first time on this occasion.

Significant works from the key periods of her craft are highlighted through insightful commentary in the form of narrative captions, offering viewers a meticulous and informative walkthrough of pioneering artist-activist Inji Efflatoun's moving story.

Ever since Efflatoun's passing, Safarkhan Art Gallery was bequeathed the entirety of her estate by her surviving cousin, Hassan Galal El Din.

Subsequently, the gallery has held the proud role of being the exclusive custodian and one of the principal promoters and disseminators of her remaining body of work.

Safarkhan has hosted six posthumous exhibitions for Efflatoun, the most recent of which was held in 2019 prior to her 100th anniversary. It was titled 'Remembering Inji: Centennial Collection'.



Israeli airstrike in southern Gaza city of Rafah kills at least 9 Palestinians, including 6 children



A YOUNG Palestinian wounded in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip is brought to the Kuwaiti Hospital in Rafah refugee camp, southern Gaza Strip, early Saturday.

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (News Wires) – An Israeli airstrike on a house in Gaza's southernmost city killed at least nine people, six of them children, hospital authorities said yesterday, as Israel pursued its nearly seven-month offensive in the besieged Palestinian territory.

Israel's war against Hamas has led to a dramatic escalation of tensions in an already volatile Middle East.

The strike late Friday hit a residential building in the western Tel Sultan neighbourhood of the city of Rafah, according to Gaza's civil defense. The bodies of the six children, two women and a man were taken to Rafah's Abu Yousef al-Najjar hospital, the hospital's records showed.

At the hospital, relatives cried and hugged the bodies of the children, wrapped in white shrouds, as others comforted them.

The fatalities included Abdel-Fattah Sobhi Radwan, his wife Najlaa Ahmed Aweidah and their three children, his brother-in-law Ahmed Barhoum said. Barhoum also lost his wife, Rawan Radwan, and their 5-year-old daughter Alaa.

"This is a world devoid of all human values and morals," Barhoum told **AP** yesterday morning, crying as he cradled and gently rocked the body of Alaa in his arms. "They bombed a house full of displaced people, women and children. There were no martyrs but women and children."

No victims were registered from a second overnight strike in the city.

Rafah, which lies on the border with Egypt, currently hosts more than half of Gaza's total population of about 2.3 million people, the vast majority of whom have been displaced by fighting further north in the territory.

Despite calls for restraint from the international community, including Israel's staunchest ally, the United States, the Israeli government has insisted for months that it intends to push a ground offensive into the city, where it says many of the remaining Hamas militants are holed up.

Such a ground operation has not materialised so far, but the Israeli military has repeatedly carried out airstrikes on and around the city.

The war was sparked by an unprecedented raid into southern Israel by Hamas and other militant groups on Oct. 7 that left about 1,200 people dead, the vast majority of them civilians, and saw about 250 people kidnapped and taken into Gaza. Israel says about 130 hostages remain in Gaza, although more than 30 have been confirmed to now be dead, either killed on Oct. 7 or having died in captivity.

The Gaza Health Ministry said yesterday the bodies of 37 people killed by Israeli strikes were brought to hospitals in Gaza over the past 24 hours. Hospitals also received 68 wounded, it said. The latest figures bring the overall Palestinian death toll from the Israel-Hamas war to at least 34,049, and the number of wounded to 76,901, the ministry said. Although the Hamas-run health authorities do not differentiate between combatants and civilians in their count, they say at least two thirds have been children and women.

The war has sent regional tensions spiraling, leading to a dramatic eruption of violence between Israel and its archenemy Iran that threatened to escalate into a full-blown war.

On Friday, both Iran and Israel played down an apparent Israeli airstrike near a major air base and nuclear site in central Iran, indicating the two sides were pulling back from what could have become an all-out conflict. Over the past several weeks, an alleged Israeli strike killed two Iranian generals at an Iranian consulate in Syria and was followed by an unprecedented Iranian missile barrage on Israel.

Israel has also faced off with the Hezbollah militant group, an Iranian proxy operating from Lebanon, with the two sides there frequently trading rocket and drone attacks across the Lebanese-Israeli border. Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have also joined the fray, launching strikes against merchant ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in what they say is a campaign of solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza.

Tension has also been high in the occupied West Bank, where an Israeli military raid Friday in the Nur Shams refugee camp killed at least four Palestinians, including three militants, according to the Israeli military, Palestinian health officials and a militant group.

Palestinian health authorities said one of those killed was a 15-year-old boy shot dead by Israeli fire. The Islamic Jihad militant group confirmed the deaths of three members, including one who it said was a local military commander. The Israeli military said four Israeli soldiers were slightly wounded in the operation.

Saraya al-Quds, the military arm of Islamic Jihad, said its fighters had engaged in heavy gun battles yesterday morning with Israeli forces in the town of Tulkarem, adjacent to Nur Shams. No further details were immediately available. Residents in Tulkarem went went on a general strike yesterday to protest the attack on Nur Shams, with shops, restaurants and government offices all closed.

The Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the West Bank, has a limited foothold in many of the territory's northern towns and cities, including Tulkarem and Jenin. Militant groups, including Islamic Jihad, are active in both cities, often clashing with Israeli soldiers during army raids.

Since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel, more than 460 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank, Palestinian health officials say. Israel stages frequent raids into towns and cities in the volatile territory. The dead have included militants, but also stone-throwers and bystanders. Some have also been killed in attacks by Israeli settlers.

US military strategy tested as Tehran-Tel-Aviv warfare comes out of shadows



AN anti-US banner is carried on a truck during Army Day parade at a military base in northern Tehran, Iran, April 17, 2024.

WASHINGTON (News Wires) – The US military's success helping Israel stop a massive wave of Iranian missiles and drones last weekend might suggest Washington is well prepared militarily for whatever comes next as Iran and Israel move from shadow warfare to direct confrontation.

But current and former US officials say US forces are not positioned for a major, sustained Middle East conflict and the Pentagon may have to revisit assumptions about military needs in the region if the crisis deepens.

"I don't think we have all the forces that we would want to support Israel if there was a direct war between them and Iran," said Michael Mulroy, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East under the Trump administration.

Though Tehran has indicated it had no plans to retaliate for an apparent Israeli strike on Friday, the tit-for-tat attacks have raised fears of an unpredictable regional war that the United States has sought to prevent.

In the months since an attack by Hamas militants on Israel triggered a war in Gaza that has ignited unrest throughout the Middle East, the United States has rushed thousands of US service members to a region that had seen a steadily declining US presence over years.

But many of those new US troops are on warships and aircraft that move in and out of the region, and are only temporarily deployed. That US strategy to rely on surge forces could be tested now Iran and Israel have broken the taboo of open military strikes against each other.

"What it means for the US military is that I think we have to revisit this idea of what are the necessary, sustainable (military) capabilities that we have to maintain in the region," said Joseph Votel, a retired four star Army general who led US troops in the Middle East.

Sustained Focus

Votel and other former officials said the US military's success in downing Iran's drones and missiles last Saturday was presumably aided by detailed US intelligence that allowed the Pentagon to anticipate the timing and targets of Iran's attack.

"I think the bigger concern is our ability to be responsive over a sustained period of time," Votel said.

US officials say Iran does not appear to want an all-out war with Israel, and Tehran has played down Friday's strike. Still, experts warn the situation is unpredictable, particularly as long as the Israel-Hamas conflict rages.

US Army General Michael "Erik" Kurilla, the current head of Central Command, told lawmakers last month that he had requested more troops than the Pentagon had sent to his region, which President Joe Biden's administration has said is a lower priority than the challenge from China, for example.

In written testimony to the House Armed Services Committee, Kurilla said a dangerous shortfall in US intelligence assets, targeting expertise and linguists "contributes to gaps and seams in our ability to detect and disrupt plots, increasing freedom of movement" for violent extremist organisations.

Although Kurilla's comments appeared more focused on Afghanistan, some intelligence shortfalls have already affected US strategy since the start of the war in Gaza.

For example, a lack of detail about Houthi weapons stockpiles before the Iran-backed group started attacking commercial shipping in the Red Sea has made it hard to determine the effect of months of strikes on the group's arsenal of missiles and drones, said officials.

Still, sending more US troops to the Middle East and bolstering intelligence assets longer-term could prove difficult, officials say.

"Troops are spread around Europe (and) those that aren't are going through overdue maintenance cycles," one US official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"And Asia is supposed to be the focus."

Another official said it was still unclear whether the US military was prepared to pull forces from Asia or Europe, despite the increase in tensions.

Prior to October, the last time the United States surged thousands of troops into the Middle East was under former President Donald Trump, during a series of escalatory actions that culminated in the US killing of Iran's top general and a retaliatory missile attack by Tehran on a US base in Iraq.

The first US official noted that the surge of troops in 2019 and 2020 was possible because, unlike today, Washington did not have to dedicate so many personnel and resources to Europe – a new reality following Russia's 2022 attack on Ukraine.

Mulroy said the United States should strengthen its position in the Middle East without abandoning its China-first focus.

"We need to deploy forces based on the current threat environment. And the current trend ... is obviously a potential for a broader nation-on-nation conflict in the Middle East," Mulroy said.

Deadly blast at Iraq army base amid Israel-Iran tensions

BAGHDAS (News Wires) – One person was killed and eight wounded in an overnight explosion at an Iraqi military base housing a coalition of pro-Iranian armed groups, officials said yesterday.

The full details remain unclear hours after the blast hit the Kalsu military base in Babylon province south of Baghdad, where regular army, police and members of Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces, or Hashed al-Shaabi, are stationed.

It comes days after Iran launched an unprecedented assault on Israel which reportedly responded with a drone strike on the Islamic republic, amid tensions fuelled by the Gaza war.

The Iraqi security forces' media unit said "an explosion and a fire" hit the Kalsu base in the early hours of yesterday, leaving one person dead and eight wounded.

Air defence command reported "no drones or combat aircraft in the airspace of Babylon province before or during the explosion", it added in a statement.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Shortly after the explosion, the US military said its forces were not behind a reported strike in Iraq.

"The United States has not conducted air strikes in Iraq today," US Central Command (CENTCOM) posted on social media platform X, adding that reports that American forces had carried out a strike were "not true".

When reached by **AFP**, the Israeli army said it "does not comment on information published in foreign media".

In a statement, Hashed al-Shaabi said an "explosion" had inflicted "material losses" and casualties, without giving a number.

The group confirmed its premises on the military base had been hit and that investigators had been sent to the site.

An interior ministry official had initially reported an "aerial bombing" on the site.

"The explosion hit equipment, weapons and vehicles," said the source.

An Iraqi military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject, said the overnight explosion had occurred in "warehouses storing equipment".

Responding to questions from AFP, security sources did not say who may have been behind the attack.

The Hashed al-Shaabi is an integral part of the official Iraqi security apparatus under the authority of the prime minister.

It brings together several pro-Iran armed factions, some of which have also carried out dozens of attacks in Iraq and Syria against US forces deployed as part of an international anti-jihadist coalition.

"We will retaliate against whoever is behind this aggression," Hashed commander Abu Alaa al-Walai wrote on X, formerly Twitter. "Those involved in this odious crime will pay the price."

The Hashed issued another statement on Saturday morning that referred to a meeting between its chief of staff and investigation committees at the site of the attack.



Documentary, fantasy at Cannes

By Youssra el-Sharkawy

TWO Egyptian directors, Nada Riyadh and Ayman el-Amir, can add the Cannes Film Festival to their lists of credits this year.

Their documentary film Rafa-3tu Aini lil-Samaa (The Brink of Dreams), which has a spot in the Film Festival's Critics' Week, traces the journey of three Copt teenage girls who challenge traditional Upper Egyptian society by forming an all-female theatre troupe. The girls' productions, inspired by Egyptian folklore, explore the issues of early marriage, domestic violence and girls' education.

Magda dreams of studying theatre in Cairo and becoming an actress. Heidi wants to become a ballet dancer, and Monica a famous singer.

The movie was filmed entirely on location over four years in the village of Barsha in el-Menya Governorate.

Ayman el-Amir said: "The message of the film is that faith and art can change society for the better. It is also about how to achieve dreams even if they seem impossible."

The film is the only Egyptian film that was officially selected for the Critic's Week competition this year, along with six international films from the United States of America, Brazil, France, Argentina, Belgium, and Taiwan.

Work by another Egyptian director, Hala el-Qusi will be screened during the Directors' Week section of the festival.



Her Sharq 12 (East of Noon), set in an enclosed mysterious place outside time, is a foray into fantasy and black comedy. A young musician rebels against the person who rules this world with absurdity and violence. The musician plans to break the grip of the ruler and gain freedom in a wider world.

The film was shot over 22 days between Cairo and Qosair.

The 77th Cannes Film Festival is scheduled for 15-24 May.

A heist movie that gleefully collides with a monster movie in 'Abigail'



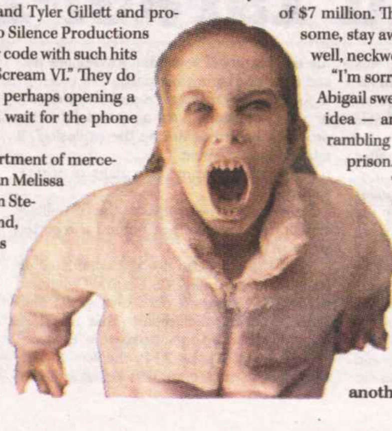
LOS Angeles (News Wires) - If you always thought your garden-variety heist movies could do with a bit more blood-sucking vampire, have we got a flick for you.

"Abigail," featuring a 12-year-old tutu-wearing member of the undead, is way better than it should be, a gleeful genre-smashing romp through puddles of gore.

Directors Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett and producer Chad Villella — part of Radio Silence Productions — have cracked the modern horror code with such hits as "Ready or Not," "Scream" and "Scream VI." They do not disappoint with "Abigail," even perhaps opening a new, bloody revenue stream. (And wait for the phone call scene, a nod to "Scream.")

"Abigail" starts with an odd assortment of mercenaries — played by "Scream" veteran Melissa Barrera, "Downton Abbey" star Dan Stevens, Kathryn Newton, Kevin Durand, William Catlett and the late Angus Cloud.

The six — representing the muscle, sniper, computer expert, getaway driver, medic etc — are hired to kidnap a rich preteen (nicknamed "Tiny Dancer") and hold her for ransom. The rules are: No names. No backstory. No grabass, which is a weird request, if we're being honest. All this group needs to do is detain the target for 24 hours until rich dad pays $50 million in ransom.

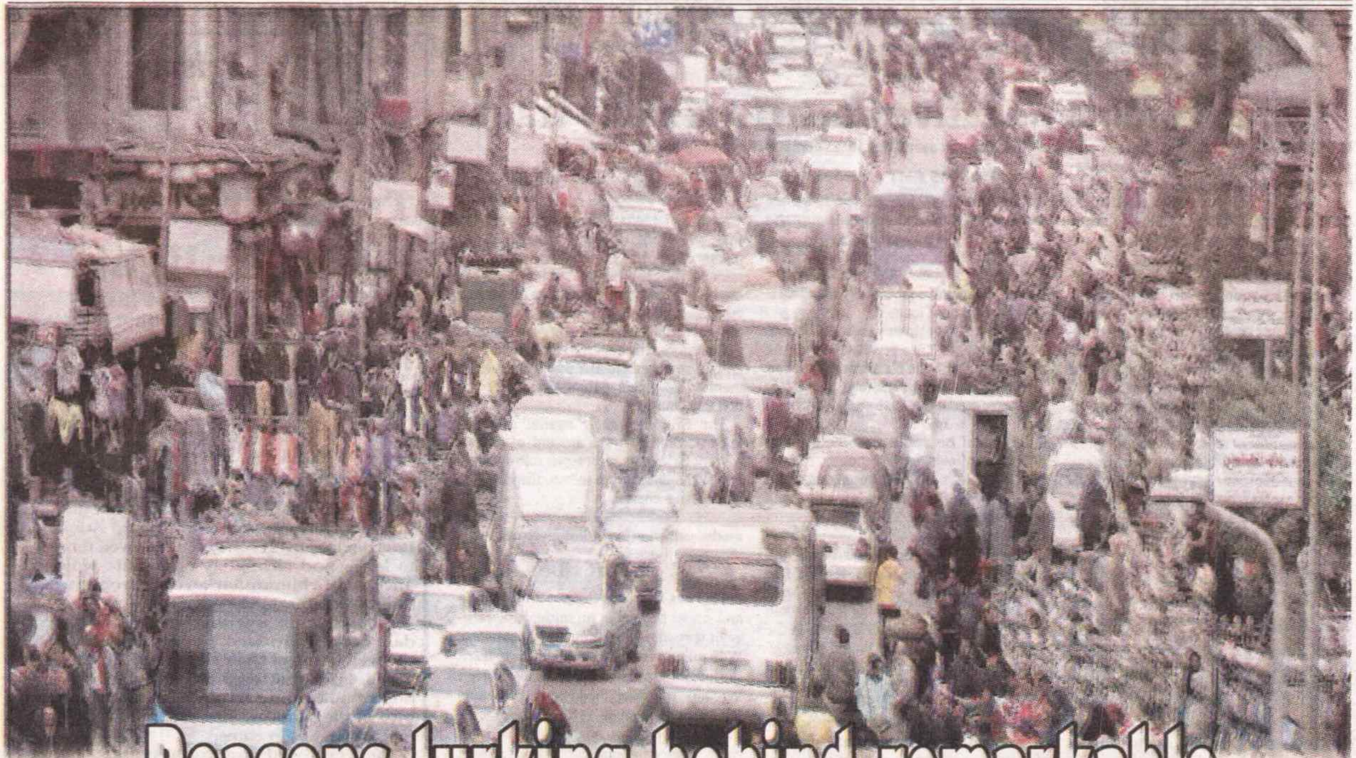


Why are six professional underworld characters needed to snatch and detain a sweet preteen, still wearing her tutu? That's easy: Not all of them are going to survive to claim their share of $7 million. That's because Abigail (Alisha Weir, awesome, stay away from me, no seriously) is really into, well, neckwork.

"I'm sorry about what's going to happen to you," Abigail sweetly tells the kidnappers. We have some idea — and it's going to be great. Suddenly, the rambling estate they're holding her becomes a prison. The tables are turned.

The script written by Stephen Shields ("The Hole in the Ground") and regular Radio Silence collaborator Guy Busick ("Ready or Not" and the "Scream" movies) — gleefully mines humor in the horror. Laughing a moment after a body fully explodes is normal here.

"This whole thing is a trip," says one of the gang. Believe them. "Something doesn't add up," says another. Believe that guy, too.



Reasons lurking behind remarkable decrease in Egypt's population growth rate

Amira Sayed



ON launching the National Project for Egyptian Family Development in February 2022, President Abdel Fattah El Sisi said terrorism and population were the greatest threats to progress. Terrorism, thankfully, is well under control. Population growth is not.

The phrase 'Egypt's population' evokes images of overcrowded school classrooms and hospitals and the inevitable snapshot of traffic jams in downtown Cairo. Indeed, 'population' has all the connotations of water and food insecurity, the number of people outstripping resources, hundreds of applicant for one job vacancy and, worst of all, 60 per cent of the nation living under the poverty line.

Despite all this, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development announced the lowest population growth from 2.6 per cent in 2017 to 1.4 per cent in 2023, which, the ministry said, "reflects state efforts to address the population issue".

The ministry statement said 2 million births in 2023 marked decreases of 15 per cent and 7 per cent compared to 2018 compared to 2022 respectively.

The National Project for the Development of the Egyptian Family covers women's economic empowerment, family planning, public awareness campaigns and monitoring services for families, said Minister of Planning Hala el-Saeed.

"The reduction in population growth is thanks to efforts by ministries involved in the population issue and increased public awareness of the link between family planning and improving economic conditions, the minister added."

In 1850, the population was 5 million, by 1950, it was 20 million and 40 million in 1978. In 2007, Egypt was home to 70 million, 92 million in 2016, hitting the 100-million mark in 2020, and 105 million today.

The government always links population growth with development.

"Population growth devours the fruits of development, and with it the individual does not feel any real improvement in his standard of living," said the government in its plan for 2023-2024.

According to a previous statement by the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics, rising population means more poverty. And the poor account for 80.6 per cent of Egyptians.

In September 2023, during the activities of

During the World Conference on Health, Population and Development last September in Egypt, a road map was prepared in line with UN sustainable development goals and Egypt's Vision 2030.

Critics would point out that this national population strategy was neither the first nor the last of state plans and efforts to deal with the population issue. Rather, it is one step among many at all levels to tackle the problem.

Editorial

How to combat negative impacts of carry trade

MAINTAINING a stabilised foreign exchange market is essential in the coming years. That's why the government is stepping up coordination with the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) to combat any negative repercussions of carry trade.

The CBE increased overnight interest rates by 600 basis points in early March to combat inflation and strengthen the local currency versus the US dollar. Central banks around the world usually scale rates up to tame inflation.

The currency float has opened the door for dollar inflows worth billions of dollars, especially after the signing of Ras El-Hekma deal between the Egyptian government and the United Arab Emirates. The $34 billion investment deal has boosted Egypt's foreign exchange market and improved investor confidence and overall business climate.

What is carry trade?

Carry trade, or hot money, flows are fast-moving assets. Carry trade may rise or fall sharply in a surprising way.

By definition, carry trade includes short-term portfolio, i.e. stocks, bonds, T-bills, financial derivatives and short-term foreign bank loans.

US-based investment bank Goldman Sachs expects the devaluation of the pound along with the six-percentage-point rate hike will catalyse strong interest in the carry trade, forecasting $15 billion of net inflows in 2024.

It should be noted that short-term portfolio inflows, or hot money, cannot be a reliable means for countries seeking long-term economic stability and sustainable development.

One of the main concerns with carry trade is that it can lead to excessive volatility in exchange rates. When large amounts of capital flow into a country to take advantage of higher interest rates, it can cause the currency to appreciate rapidly. This can hurt exporters by making their goods more expensive for foreign buyers, leading to a decrease in exports and potentially harming economic growth.

Therefore, the government should keep an eye on economic and political developments that could potentially affect the currency markets.

The CBE can apply capital controls, such as limits on the amount of foreign currency that can be brought into or taken out of the country, to reduce the inflow of speculative capital.

Happy Eid !



By Dr Laila Abdel Aal Alghalban

DO you still remember the nursery rhymes or children's songs you used to sing with peers when you were a kid? Do you still remember the songs or rhymes your parents and grandparents used to sing to you? The answer is definitely 'Yes'. You may ask: "Why?". The answer proposed by many studies on memory and language learning is that our brains process rhymed input more deeply and more easily than unrhymed input. When music, repetition and storytelling are combined, this helps memorisation and the acquisition of new vocabulary. It makes us joyfully relate to peers, family and teachers.

Music, the body and language learning

How music affects the body is a very interesting and yet not fully-discovered issue. By its very definition, music has to do with sounds which are harmoniously combined to change the chemical interactions in our bodies and evoke emotions in us. Music is also part of our body. Think about your voice, that miraculous musical instrument that plays, through speaking and singing, varied tunes that stir up emotions beyond comprehension. Think about how your body organs work rhythmically: your heart, feet, hands, respiratory system, etc. Music is inside us and it is part of who we are. Language also has music, and when language and music get together, they rock us massively. Think about the emotions you experience when language and music are combined in movies, songs, opera, theatre, etc. In other words, language, music and culture are inseparable. There have been incredible examples of the role music plays in saving endangered languages.

A tale of three 'softquakes'

"Imagine a world without The Beetles, How would it look like?" Would the pop storm that hits music and world entertainment industry be there? Would the hits *"Get Back", "She Loves You", "I Feel Fine"*, among others exist and have such a huge impact on the global fans? Would the world fashion industry be defined the way it was by the Beetles? Would the mop-top hair cut, casual wear, Chelsea boots appear and males all over the world copy them blindly? More importantly, would the world know about Liverpool or 'Scouse' accent and love it that much? Definitely, the world would have missed the stunning artistic, cultural, and linguistic impact of the Beetles.

Latin music

The huge popularity in Latin music in the US and the world has also contributed to the promotion of the Spanish language, which currently has an increasing share of the global population learning a foreign language. Spanish is also the second language in the US and spoken in 44 countries. It is no wonder then to find Spanish hits frequently sweeping the world. "Dispacito" is a tale to remember. Shortly after, Little Mix, Cardi B and DJ Snake find their way to top spots on the US Billboard chart in Spanish. Thus, the impact of Latin music is understandable given the large Latin-speaking diaspora around the world.

The Korean softquake

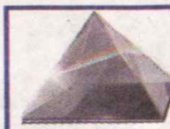
Another softquake that is currently hitting the world hard is the Korean pop industry or K-pop, South Korean super groups and bands such as Blackpink, and BTS have broken the boundaries and become famous worldwide. The boy band BTS, in particular, is taking the world by storm. Its members manage to have the most impact on spreading the Korean language and culture around the world. With a popularity compared to the Beatles in their prime, they performed on the most respected and famous stages like the billboard and American Music Awards (AMA), and won high profile awards that seemed to be restricted to American pop singers. The Korean stars have also the most interactive fan base, which is called "army". According to Twitter, they have been a social media sensation in the last few years.

Just the vibe

BTS has been a living proof that music and art in general is an undeniable power in spreading a culture and a language. With millions of loyal fans aspiring to learn the language of their beloved idols, Korean language has flourished like never before. BTS artists are stuck to their language although they insert some English in the lyrics, their songs and interactions remain in Korean. Their YouTube channel posts videos about their life and really shows who they are without all the buzz of celebrity life. It shows them in all their moods. That makes the fans connect with them on a deeper and more profound level and that may be the main reason why Korean language is spreading like never before. Fans are aspiring to connect to their idols despite the level of difficulty of the language. They want to understand their beloved artists without subtitles and connect with them without language boundaries. Fans talk about how regularly listening to BTS makes them unconsciously learn Korean. Moreover, there are fan sites, spaces for translations which render BTS hits into other languages around the world.

People, worldwide, have become more open to music in languages other than their own. The British are the last people to embrace music in foreign languages without compromises. Thanks to technology and migration, music industry is no longer controlled by a punch of Anglo-centric gatekeepers. Spotify and YouTube are now leading the way making it easy to stream songs . Finally, let us hope that these successful stories of how culture and music help disseminate languages and dialects inspire the Arab cultural and entertainment industry and teach lessons in spreading the Arabic language all over the world.

By Dr Laila Abdel Aal Alghalban
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Prism



By Ihab Shaarawy

Tragic irony of Sudan's plight

SUDAN, a nation blessed with fertile lands and the potential to be the breadbasket of Africa, faces a cruel twist of fate. A brutal year-long conflict has pushed the country to the brink of famine, forcing the international community to scramble to deliver aid. This situation exposes a glaring paradox and failure demanding immediate action.

Firstly, the international community has been neglectful. While the conflict simmered, the world largely looked away. This "inattention," as German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock aptly described it, allowed tensions to fester and ultimately erupt into violence. The result: a humanitarian catastrophe where millions teeter on the edge of starvation.

Secondly, the warring factions within Sudan have prioritised power struggles over the well-being of their citizens. This senseless conflict has shattered the nation's economic potential, turning fertile land and resources into battlegrounds. The dream of a prosperous Sudan lies in ruins.

The way ahead requires a multifaceted approach. Immediate humanitarian aid is crucial to alleviate the suffering, but a long-term solution demands addressing the root causes of the conflict. Dismantling the "violent kleptocracy," as some experts suggest, is essential to break the cycle of violence and exploitation that has plagued Sudan.

The recent international gathering in Paris sought to rally support for Sudan's struggling population, underscoring the grave situation the country faces. While pledges of aid exceeding €2 billion were made, the stark reality is that only a fraction of the necessary funding has been received so far. The conference served to highlight the dire circumstances confronting Sudan and the critical need for continued international assistance to address the challenges its people are grappling with.

The failure of the international community to adequately address Sudan's plight speaks volumes about the challenges of modern diplomacy. Leaders worldwide voice unity and guarantee help. But facts on the ground contradict this. Red tape and logistical issues hinder humanitarian efforts. Political fixes seem unattainable amid clashing groups and factions.

A plan beyond temporary aid is urgently needed to find peace. This strategy must involve more than just global mediators. Sudanese experts should contribute too. Sociologists, political scientists, economists from Sudan offer valuable understanding of root causes. Collaborating, they could craft approaches uprooting discontent seeds, building a lasting peaceful path.

At the heart of Sudan's crisis lies a fundamental question of governance and accountability. The Sudanese people, weary from years of conflict and deprivation, deserve more than just temporary relief measures. They deserve a future free from violence and oppression, where their voices are heard and their rights respected.

Sudan's tragedy shows the world how neglecting conflicts harms people terribly. The international community must learn from it and work actively to help stop conflicts from starting. For the Sudanese people, the dream of a peaceful and prosperous nation lies within reach. By uniting their own expertise with international support, they can transform their breadbasket from a symbol of famine to a beacon of hope and self-sufficiency.



Trump; Elon Musk; Zamalek

By Mail Staff

SOCIAL media users spoke last week about Former US president Donald Trump making history by becoming the first US president to seat at the defence table; Elon Musk planning to charge new X (formerly Twitter) users a 'small fee' before they post on the social media platform and Zamalek securing a crucial 2-1 victory over Al-Ahly a breathtaking derby.

Google Doodle marks Etel Adnan

This week, Google Doodle celebrates Lebanese American poet and artist Etel Adnan, who is considered one of the most accomplished Arab American authors of her era.

Adnan was the daughter of a Greek mother and Turkish father who were migrants to Lebanon. Adnan had a diverse upbringing as she spoke Greek and Turkish at home, attended a French language school, and lived in a primarily Arabic speaking country.

At age 23, she moved to France to study philosophy and art at University of Paris and then moved to the states to continue her studies at the University of California Berkeley and Harvard. She eventually returned to Lebanon to serve as a journalist and editor for the newspapers Al Safa and L'Orient le Jour, where she helped develop a section dedicated to culture in Lebanon and the Middle East.

As a writer, her novels and poems explored themes of identity, memory, feminism, and the human experience.

These written works spanned across languages, cultures, continents, reflecting the many identities and experiences she had. She authored several books and poetry collections such as Moonshots (1966), Sitt Marie Rose (1978), Paris, When It's Naked (1993), and Master of the Eclipse (2009) among others.

Etel Adnan's contributions to the arts earned her several different awards and accolades including the Lambda Literary Award in 2013, France's Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres in 2014, the Griffin Poetry Prize Lifetime Recognition Award in 2020, and more. She leaves behind a rich legacy of artistic and literary achievements that continue to capture and inspire audiences today.

Donald Trump 1st US President facing criminal case

Former US president Donald Trump made history by becoming the first US president to seat at the defence table. The first criminal trial started last Monday.



Trump faces 34 low-level felony counts of falsifying business records in connection with his reimbursements to his then-fixer, Michael Cohen, for paying porn actress Stormy Daniels $130,000 in October 2016 to stay quiet about an alleged sexual encounter with Trump.

Trump consistently criticises his legal challenges, alleging that judges, prosecutors, and even President Biden are politically targeting him to prevent him from seeking office again.

"They weaponise government, and they take me to court on bullshit," Trump said in a video posted to Truth Social last week.

White Knights secures crucial victory over Red Devils

In a breathtaking derby between the Red Devils and the White Knights, Zamalek secured a crucial 2-1 victory in a breathtaking derby. The match was postponed from the tenth round of the Egyptian Premier League. Al-Ahly in a postponed match from the tenth round of the Egyptian Premier League.

With this victory, the white knights reach tenth place in the Egyptian Premier League table with 21 points.

Al-Ahly, on the other hand, remains in ninth place with the same number of points.



The derby's goals were netted by Tunisian forward Seifeddine Jaziri one in the 45th minute and another in the 86th minute for Zamalek, as well as, Ahmed Abdel Qader in the 74th for Al Ahly.

Zamalek's star midfielder Ahmed Sayed "Zizou" got injured in the fourth minute of the match.

Elon Musk plans to make new X users pay to post for the first three months



Tech mogul Elon Musk has plans to charge new X (formerly Twitter) users a 'small fee' before they post on the social media platform.

Replying to a thread by X Daily News on Tuesday, Musk said the measure is necessary to prevent bot accounts from flooding the social media platform.

"Unfortunately, a small fee for new user write access is the only way to curb the relentless onslaught of bots.

"Current AI (and troll farms) can pass 'are you a bot' with ease," Musk wrote, referring to tools like CAPTCHA.

"The onslaught of fake accounts also uses up the available namespace, so many good handles are taken as a result," he added.

Musk, however, said that the new users will be able to post for free after three months of creating their X account.

In October 2023, X launched the "Not A Bot" programme that charged an annual fee of US$1 for new X users in New Zealand and the Philippines to post, like, bookmark and reply to other posts in an attempt to reduce spam.

New users, however, were still allowed to browse X and follow other accounts for free.

Brazil legend Romario announces surprising comeback at age of 58

Age doesn't hinder the World Cup winner Romario from resuming his history with football.

The now 58-year-old surprised all this week with his decision to play for America Football Club of Rio de Janeiro, which he also happens to be president of.



The chance to play alongside his 30-year-old son Romarinhoalso seemingly convinced the Brazilian to put the boots back on.

"I'm ready to try to give my beloved America a little help," Romario wrote on Instagram.

"Thank you everyone for your support!

"It will be a dream come true to share the pitch with my son. I just want to play some matches with my beloved team and realise the dream of playing alongside my son."



Cairo gears up for African Judo Championships

By Sahar el-Zayaty



PREPARATIONS are in full swing for the highly anticipated African Senior Judo Championships, set to take place in Cairo from April 24 to April 28.

The tournament, hosted by the Egyptian Judo Federation, will see judoka from across the continent vie for continental glory and a crucial step towards Olympic qualification.

Excitement is building as 33 African nations have confirmed their participation in the championship.

Delegations and teams from Angola, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Tanzania, Zambia, and Algeria will be represented alongside host nation Egypt.

The prestigious Cairo Stadium Indoor Halls Complex will be the battleground for this high-stakes competition.

The African Judo Championships hold immense significance as they offer a crucial opportunity for judoka to secure valuable points towards qualification for the upcoming 2024 Paris Olympics. Victors in each weight category will be awarded a coveted 700 points, making every throw and pin a step closer to the Olympic dream.

The Paris Olympics judo qualification system is a rigorous process, requiring athletes to accumulate points through participation and success in international and continental tournaments.

Judoka must strategically schedule their competition calendar, aiming to compete in a maximum number of tournaments while optimising their performance to capture top spots and secure Olympic qualification.

The Paris 2024 Olympic Games will be held from Friday, July 26 to Sunday, August 11, 2024.

Paris will be the main host city, but there will be competitions across 16 other cities in metropolitan France, with one sub-site in Tahiti.

Paris 2024 aims to be the most sustainable Olympics ever. They are using recycled materials for construction, focusing on renewable energy, and promoting public transportation for athletes and spectators.

Egypt boasts a rich history of hosting major sports events, and judo is no exception.

Over the past eight years, the country has successfully staged numerous continental and international championships, solidifying its position as a global destination for the sport.

This year's African Judo Championships promise to be a showcase of African judoka talent and a thrilling prelude to the Paris Olympics.

With a record number of participating nations and Olympic qualification on the line, the atmosphere in Cairo is sure to be electric.

EGYPTIAN JUDO, AIKIDO, SUMO FEDERATION
الاتحاد المصري للجودو و الأيكيدو و السومو

PARIS 2024

Sabalenka out of Stuttgart Open, Swiatek into semis



Marketa Vondrousova



Aryna Sabalenka

STUTTGART, Germany (News Wires) — World number two Aryna Sabalenka's hopes of reaching a fourth consecutive Stuttgart Open final ended after a 3-6 6-3 7-5 quarter-final defeat by Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova, while champion Iga Swiatek maintained her perfect record at the event.

World number one Swiatek extended her run at the tournament to 10-0 and is now two wins away from claiming a third successive Stuttgart title following her 7-6(2) 6-3 win over Briton's Emma Raducanu.

She will face fourth seed Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina for a place in Sunday's final.

Belarus' Sabalenka had won her last four matches with Vondrousova, and after winning the opening set, the Australian Open champion looked on course to progress.

Wimbledon champion Vondrousova led 4-1 in the second set before Sabalenka pulled it back to 4-3 but the Czech sixth seed broke for a third time and held serve to force the decider.

Sabalenka went 5-4 ahead in the final set before Vondrousova reeled off three games in a row to reach the semi-finals where she will meet either American third seed Coco Gauff or Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine.

"It was a very tough match, and I think a great one, too," Vondrousova said according to Reuters.

"She's a great player so I just tried to stay in the rallies. She hits very fast so it's tough to do something. But I stayed calm in the crucial moments."

Sabalenka reached the quarter-finals after her good friend Paula Badosa was forced to retire through injury on Wednesday, with the match tied at one set each and 3-3 in the decider.

Sabalenka struck 35 winners to Vondrousova's 17, but also committed 48 unforced errors compared to 19. Moreover, the Wimbledon champion had a clinical break point conversion rate of seven from eight, while Sabalenka converted six from 15.

Crucially, though defence was the bedrock of Vondrousova's game against the erratic Sabalenka, she was also willing to take the play into her own hands when she needed to.

The 24-year-old's finest stretches were the start of the second set, where she leapt out to a 4-1 lead in a flurry of return winners, drop shots and heavy forehands; and the final three games from 5-4 down in the decider, during which she found a pair of key volley winners.

Fourth seed Elena Rybakina also reached the semi-finals after overcoming the challenge of in-form Jasmine Paolini 6-3 5-7 6-3.

Paolini won the Dubai Tennis Championships in February and rose to a career-high 14th in the world rankings and reached the last 16 at Indian Wells in March.

After winning the opening set, Rybakina had let slip a 4-2 lead in the second and came back from an early break by the Italian in the final set.

"I'm happy with my energy," Rybakina said. "Of course, I had chances in the second set where I could have closed it out but overall, I think it's just a matter of matches and feeling better and better on the court."



Iga Swiatek

Ruud, Tsitsipas advance to Barcelona semis

Casper Ruud and Stefanos Tsitsipas claimed wins to advance to the Barcelona Open semi-finals, keeping them on course to meet in a second straight final. Ruud beat Matteo Arnaldi 6-4, 6-3 to notch his season-leading 27th win. The sixth-ranked Norwegian has two more wins than Jannik Sinner.

Tsitsipas saved two match points to rally past Facundo Diaz 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (8).

Tsitisipas struggled with his serve and double-faulted seven times. One of them cost him a break while the Greek player was trying to serve out the match up 5-4 in the third set.

He then had to save a match point while serving again before facing the brink again in the tiebreaker.

"I feel like having so many matches under my belt and faced situations like this helps for sure," Tsitsipas said according to AP. "I knew anything was possible at any given time."

The seventh-ranked Tsitsipas easily defeated Ruud to claim his third title at Monte Carlo last weekend.

Ruud is trying to reach his fourth final this year. Besides the loss in Monte Carlo, he also lost finals in Los Cabos and Acapulco.

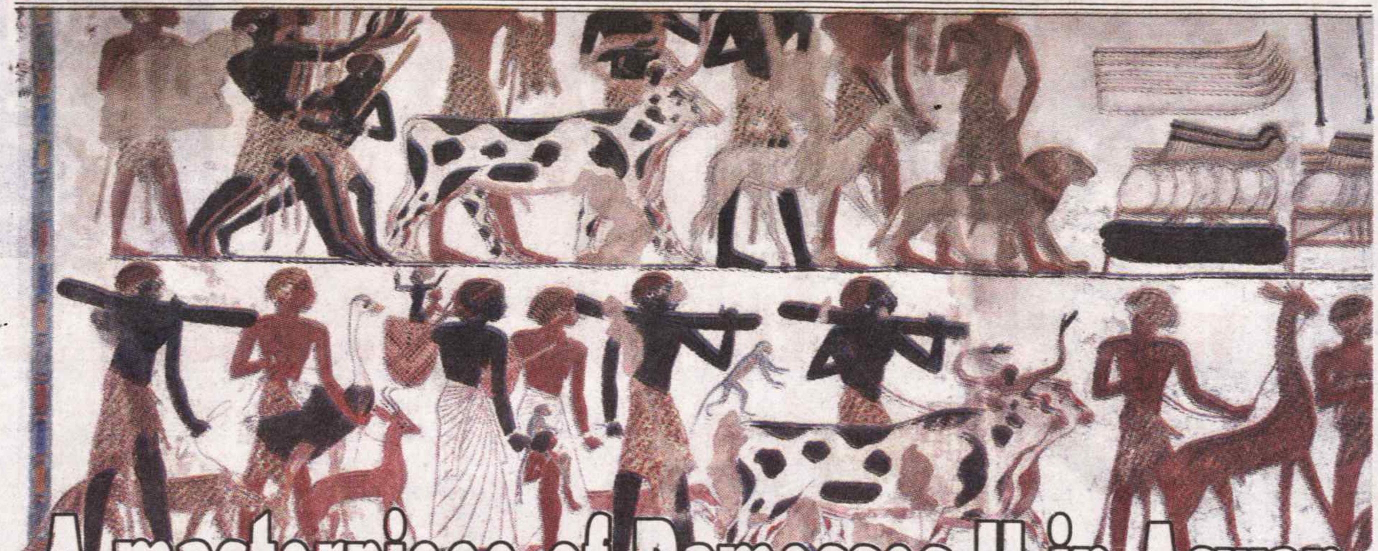
Ruud will face Tomas Martin Etcheverry on Saturday after the Argentine defeated Cameron Norrie 7-6 (4), 7-6 (1).

Ruud got the better of Martin Etcheverry in their only previous meeting last year, when he had to rally from a set down in Beijing.

"It is going to be another difficult match," Ruud said.

Dusan Lajovic meets Arthur Fils to see which will face Tsitsipas, who lost last year's Barcelona final to Carlos Alcaraz. Top-seeded Alcaraz withdrew from the tournament before it started because of an injury, while second-seeded Andrey Rublev lost in the second round.

Rafael Nadal, a 12-time champion in Barcelona, made his return to the courts for the first time since January on Tuesday, only to lose the next day.



A masterpiece of Ramesses II in Aswan

By Mail staff

THE Temple of Beit el-Wali is by far one of the most interesting and attractive sites in Aswan in southern Egypt.

A rock-cut ancient structure, the temple, which is specifically located in Nubia, was constructed by Pharaoh Ramesses II.

This Egyptian pharaoh dedicated the temple to Amun-Re; Re-Horakhti; Khnum, and Anuket which were all renowned deities at the time.

The Temple of Beit el-Wali was the first in a series of temples built by Ramesses II in this region.

Beit el-Wali means the 'House of the Holy Man'. This name may indicate the temple's previous use by a Christian hermit at some point in time.

The temple was relocated during the 1960s as part of the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia upon the construction of the Aswan High Dam, a project aimed at shielding Egypt against recurrent Nile flooding.

The temple was moved towards higher ground along with the Temple of Kalabsha.

This move was coordinated with a team of Polish archaeologists. The temple was located 50 kilometres south of Aswan.

The Nubian temples of Ramesses II were part of a state sponsored policy designed to maintain Egyptian control over this area.

There is a large amount of original colour remaining in the inner part of this temple, though the paint has disappeared from the historical scenes on its Forecourt.

Near the middle of the south wall of the temple, Ramesses II is depicted charging into battle against the Nubians while his two young sons, Amunher-khepsef and Khaemwaset, are shown being present in this relief scene.

In the next relief scene, Ramesses is enthroned, receiving the tribute of Nubia.

In the upper register, Ramesses' eldest son and the viceroy, Amenemope, present the tribute procession. The viceroy is rewarded for his efforts with gold collars.

A painted cast from a wall relief in the Beit el-Wali temple then illustrates the wealth of exotic products which the Egyptians obtained in trade or tribute from the Kushites.

Here, the pharaoh receives leopard-skins, giraffe tails, giraffes, monkeys, leopards, cattle, antelopes, gazelles, lions, ostrich feathers and eggs, ebony, ivory, fans, bowls, shields made of animal hides, and gold.

Some of the Nubians who are part of the tribute would be destined to be taken to Egypt to work on the king's building projects, act as policemen or be recruited into the army for service in Syria.

The overriding theme of Egyptian military success is also hammered home on the opposite wall, where Ramesses II's triumphal campaigns in Libya and Syria were recorded.

He is portrayed trampling his enemies and holding others by their hair in his left hand while smiting them with his right.

The theme of Ramesses' might is also carried into the temple's interior where there are further smiting scenes on the walls of the vestibule.

Henceforth, Ramesses II is shown as a pious ruler who worships other deities. Besides the doorway leading to the sanctuary are niches containing statues of the king with (on the left) Isis and Horus and (on the right) Khnum and Anuket, the gods of Elephantine and the First Cataract.

The pharaoh is shown presenting vases of wine to Khnum. The deity Anuket offers Ramesses several jubilees.

The sanctuary contains three rock-cut cult images, perhaps that of Amun, Ptah and Ramesses II.

The most touching scenes are on either side of the doorway where Ramesses is shown as a child being suckled by Isis and Anuket. The statue niche was, however, destroyed later perhaps in the Christian era.

The exquisite reliefs of Beit el-Wali and its unusual plan differentiates it from later temples by this pharaoh which are located further south in Nubia.

The temple of Beit el-Wali is small, and was built on a symmetrical level.

It is made up of a forecourt, an anteroom with two columns and a sanctuary cut into the surrounding rock, with the exception of the entrance and the doorway.

The temple was fronted by a pylon. At the beginning of the Christian Coptic period, this temple was used as a church.